



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History **19 – 25 November 2012**



25 Nov 1940 **First flight of the Martin B-26 Marauder.** The B-26 had superior speed and performance, but its small wings made it hard to fly, requiring extra skill in takeoffs and unusually high landing speeds. Frequent accidents in B-26 training led to its unofficial nickname "Widowmaker."

The B-26 was the first American medium bomber used in the Pacific Theater. After design modifications, later B-26 models had the lowest loss record of any combat aircraft in World War II.



24 Nov 1944 **Target: Tokyo.** After plans to reach the Japanese capital from China failed, B-29s took off from the Mariana Islands to bomb aircraft factories, docks and other targets in Tokyo. This was the first time Tokyo had been bombed since the Doolittle raid of 1942. The mission was led by the 73rd Bomb Wing Commander, Brigadier General Emmett O'Donnell, whose copilot was Major Robert Morgan, erstwhile pilot of the famed B-17, *Memphis Belle*. Some of the 111 B-29 crews on the mission had arrived on Saipan only a week before.



22 Nov 1952 **MEDAL OF HONOR.** Major Charles Joseph Loring died while leading a flight of four F-80s on a close air support mission during the Korean War. Loring's plane was hit by ground fire as he verified gun positions. His Medal of Honor citation reads: "Major Loring deliberately altered his course and aimed his diving aircraft at active gun emplacements concentrated on a ridge northwest of the briefed target, turned his aircraft 45 degrees to the left, pulled up in a deliberate, controlled maneuver, and elected to sacrifice his life by diving his aircraft directly into the midst of the enemy emplacements. His selfless and

heroic action completely destroyed the enemy gun emplacement and eliminated a dangerous threat to United Nations ground forces. Major Loring's superlative gallantry and valor far beyond the normal call of duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflected great credit upon himself, the Far East Air Forces, and the United States Air Force." Commemorating Major Loring's sacrifice, the painting *Loring's Fini Flight* by Gerald Asher is on display in the Headquarters PACAF Command Section on Hickam AFB.



21 Nov 1957 The DoD announced that the **first ICBM base** would be built at Francis E. Warren AFB near Cheyenne, Wyoming. On 22 Nov 1982, President Reagan decided to deploy the M-X in the "Dense Pack" closely spaced basing mode at Warren.



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21 Nov 1970 **SON TAY RAID.** A special task force of Air Force and Army volunteers flying on Air Force special operations helicopters attempted to rescue American servicemen from the Son Tay prisoner-of-war camp 20 miles west of Hanoi. Brig. Gen. Leroy J. Manor, USAF, commanded the operation, while Col. Arthur D. Simons of the Army led the search-and-rescue team. Air Force, Navy and Army aircraft supported the raid with air refueling, surface-to-air missile suppression, fighter cover, close air support, early warning, communications support and reconnaissance missions, as well as highly effective diversionary attacks. Unfortunately, the prisoners had just been moved by their captors due to flooding in the region. The mission was called an intelligence failure but a tactical success. There were no U.S. deaths among the raiders, who killed between 100 and 200 North Vietnamese prison guards.



The Raid, Blueboy Element by Michael Nikiporenko (commemorative painting)

In the aftermath of the Son Tay raid, North Vietnam collected the American POWs in larger, centralized camps such as the “Hanoi Hilton” where they lived together in groups under improved conditions. The POWs, mostly airmen from the various services, learned that their country had not forgotten them. Their health and morale improved for the remainder of their captivity.

Brig Gen Manor later became Lieutenant General Manor, Commander of 13th Air Force from 1 Oct 73 to 12 Oct 76. He received the PACAF Order of the Sword in April, 1976.

21-23 Nov 1994 **Project SAPPHIRE.** Three Air Force C-5s carried 1,300 pounds of highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Kazakhstan to Dover AFB to protect the nuclear material from terrorists, smugglers, and unfriendly governments.

After the Soviet Union dissolved, a cache of **weapons-grade uranium** had been uncovered in Kazakhstan. This material had to be carefully measured and safely re-packaged for airlift to the United States. The C-5s from Dover’s flew nuclear technicians and their equipment into Kazakhstan to prepare the HEU for shipment. U.S. special forces, Kazakh MVD and ex-KGB personnel guarded the convoys enroute from the nuclear facility to the airport for loading onto the C-5s. On the flight to Dover, the C-5s were refueled by KC-10 tankers. After landing at, the material was convoyed to Oak Ridge, Tennessee for conversion into commercial nuclear fuel. (At right, HEU containers in an aircraft cargo hold.)





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19 Nov 1997 **Operation PHOENIX SCORPION I.** The U.S. deployed additional forces to augment Operation SOUTHERN WATCH and to answer Iraq's continued intransigence over UN inspections of weapons of mass destruction sites. Iraq's willingness to resume the inspection program ended the deployment on 24 November, and within days most forces returned home.

19 November 2005 For the first time, **USAF pilots flying F-16s faced the Indian Air Force's** most advanced fighter — the **Su-30 MKI** — during exercise **Cope India 2006**. U.S. fighters also squared off against the MiG-21 Fishbed, MiG-27 Flogger, MiG-29 Fulcrum and Mirage 2000 during the exercise. (Below, a Misawa F-16 taxiing past MiG-27s; an Su-30 MKI takeoff.)

